

# R E P O R T

Relating to the Finding a

*NORTH·WEST*  
*PASSAGE.*

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Relating to the Finding a

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# R E P O R T

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## North-West PASSAGE.



THE Committee, appointed to Examine, and State to the House, the Matter of Fact contained in the Petition of several Merchants of the City of *London*, referred to them by Order of the House, have, in Pursuance of the said Order, inquired into the late Discoveries towards Finding a North-West Passage, made by the Ships called the *Furnace*, and the *Discovery* pink, sent on that Service at the Expence of the Publick;

And having for that Purpose examined several Officers belonging to the said Ships; do find, by the Evidence of *John Rankin*, Lieutenant of the *Furnace*, *William Moore*, Master of the Pink, and *Edward Thompson*, Surgeon of the *Furnace*;

That the said Ships arrived in *Churchill River* (a Factory belonging to the *Hudson's Bay Company*) on the Ninth of *August* One Thousand Seven hundred Forty-one; and were there laid up for the Remainder of that Year.

That

That on the First of *July* One thousand Seven hundred Forty-two, proceeding on the *Discovery*, they sailed from *Churchill*, in Latitude  $59^{\circ}$ , steering North-easterly, till they came up with *Marble Island*, or *Brook Cobham*, in Latitude  $63^{\circ}$ .

From whence, sailing on by the Eastward of the North, generally Six or Seven Leagues distant from the Land to the Westward, without any remarkable Occurrence, they arrived in Latitude  $65^{\circ}$ ; where, finding much floating Ice, and perceiving an Opening in the Coast to the Westward, it was resolved to put in at that Place, to secure the said Ships from the Ice. As they entered this Opening, they found it to be from Six to Eight Miles wide, and the Water from Fourteen to Sixteen Fathom deep; but as they went further in, the Opening grew wider, and the Water much deeper; and this Opening they afterwards named *Wager Streight* or *River*.

They then found a convenient Place, and brought the Ships to an Anchor, about Seven Leagues up these Streights; where they remained at Anchor about Three Weeks.

In which Time they sent a Boat to examine this Streight, which they observed to tend to the North North-west, at the highest Part the Boat went up to; and that the Streight was generally Ten or Twelve Leagues wide, as near as they could judge; and that, sounding the same with a Line of Sixty-eight Fathom, they had no Ground.

There was some Difference of Opinion in the Evidence of Lieutenant *Rankin*, and *Robert Wilson* the Master, as to the Saltiness of the Water at the highest Part the Boat went up to; *Rankin* saying, It was as salt as in the main Ocean; and *Wilson* saying, That it was only brackish.

Most of the Witnesses saw several Whales of the Whalebone Kind in the upper Part of the Streight; but none in the lower Part: Nor were any seen in any other Part of that great Expansion of Water called *Hudson's Bay*, the *Welcome*, or any Place besides, till this time: Nor did they hear of any being seen in those Parts, except upon the broken Coast to the South-westward of the *Welcome*.

At



At the farthest Part they went up with the Boat (which was about Twenty Leagues above the Ship) they went on shore on the South-west Side; and, from high Ground, they perceived the Streight to tend away to the Southward of the West, as far as they could see, with many Islands in it.

On the Fourth Day of *August*, the Ships sailed from these Streights by the Way they came in; and then stood away to the Eastward of the North to Latitude  $67^{\circ}$ ; then returned along the Coast, without any remarkable Occurrence, till they made *Marble Island* again, where they anchored Three or Four Days; and, the Fifteenth of *August* One thousand Seven hundred and Forty-two, they proceeded from thence directly for *England*.

It likewise appeared from the Evidence, that the Western Coast, from *Eskimaux Point*, in Latitude  $61^{\circ}$ , to *Wager River*, in Latitude  $65^{\circ}$ , was broken Land.

For the further Information of the House, your Committee have thought proper to annex hereto the Report made by the Officers, who were sent up in the Boat to make Discoveries, and went the farthest up the Streights.

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Pursuant

Pursuant to an Order from Captain  
*Christopher Middleton*, Commander of his Majesty's  
 Ship the *Furnace*, bearing Date Twenty-seventh July  
 One thousand Seven hundred and Forty-two;

WE, whose Names are hereunto subscribed, took the *Furnace's* Six-oared Boat, and went from *Savage Sound*, where his Majesty's Ships *Furnace* and *Discovery* then lay; and, on the Twenty-eighth, at One in the Morning, arrived at *Deer Sound*, where we tried the Tide, and found the Flood came into that Place from the River *Wager*, and rose at that time Ten Feet. At Six o'Clock the same Morning, we left *Deer Sound*; where we put the Two Northern *Indians* ashore, to kill some Deer for our sick Men; and sailed for a high, bluff Land on the North-west Side of the River *Wager*. Our Course, from the Islands on the North Side of *Deer Sound*, to the high, bluff Land, was North-west by North, by Compass. We sounded frequently, and had no Ground, with a Line of Sixty-eight Fathom, all the Way over. When we were a-breast of the high, bluff Land, we steered West North-west, keeping the Mid-channel, and still found no Ground at Sixty-eight Fathom, except nigh some Islands, that lay in the fair Way, about One-Third over the River, and Thirty Fathom within a League of one of them. This Course we kept, till we got about Fifteen Leagues from *Deer Sound*; but, finding the Tide or Fresh against us, and the Wind coming fair, we were afraid to stay any longer, for fear of hindering the Ships from going to Sea. However, we came to a Grapnel with the Boat, and went upon an high, mountainous Land, where we had a very fair View of the River. From thence we saw a great Run or Fall of Water between the supposed main Land and the aforesaid Islands, very narrow, seemingly not a Mile broad, and about a League from where the Boat lay; but, to the Northward, we discovered a large Collection of Water, in which were several Islands, and high, mountainous Land on both



both Sides of it, the West Side having many bluff Points, and broken Land. In our Return towards the Ships, and not far from *Deer Sound*, we saw several large Black Whales of the Whalebone Kind, some of which came very near the Boat. So that, upon the Whole, we think there may be some other Passage into the Sea from the River *Wager*, besides that which his Majesty's Ships *Furnace* and *Discovery* came in at; and imagine, there is a great Probability of an Opening or Inlet into the Sea somewhere on the East Side thereof, though we cannot fix the Place. Given under our Hands this 1st Day of *August*, 1742.

JOHN RANKIN.

ROB. WILSON.

REPORT

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE

TRADE

# REPORT

Relating to the Finding a

North-west Passage.

Made in July 1844-5.

JOHN RANKIN.  
ROB. WILSON.

both sides of it, the West side having many bluff Points and broken Land. In our Return towards the Ships, and not far from Dry Sound, we saw several large Black Whales of the Whalebone Kind, some of which came very near the Boat. So that upon the Whole, we think there may be some other Landing into the Sea from the River Water, besides that which his Majesty's Ships between and from the time in at; and imagining there is a great Probability of some opening or inlet into the Sea somewhere on the East side of the Bay, though we cannot fix the Place. Given under our Hands this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of August, 1745.



